Indian and Northern Affairs Canada / Affaires indiennes et du Nord Canada

Indian & Inuit Services

2nd Annual Aboriginal Business Conference

Denendeh Development Corporation (DDC) hosted its second annual Aboriginal Business Conference and trade show in Yellowknife October 16 -18, 2007. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's (INAC) Indian and Inuit Services' Aboriginal Economic Development and Aboriginal Business Canada (ABC) divisions provided financial support for this event.

Youth delegates attended workshops and presentations focusing on economic development

The theme this year was "Establishing Economic Cooperation" and focused on capacity building through business and workforce development. Approximately 250 delegates, including Chiefs and councillors, industry and business executives, government leaders, economic developers, human resource managers, Aboriginal, Northern and southern business owners, entrepreneurs and youth, and many others from throughout the territory attended the event.

The conference enabled delegates to share information, discuss business prospects, connect with key industry people and network on local, regional, national and international levels. This year, DDC added a trade show component and a special session for youth entitled "Preparing to Participate." More than forty youth participated in the pre-conference workshop.

There were a variety of speakers including Chief Clarence Louie of the Osoyoos Indian Band; Eira Thomas, CEO, Stornoway Diamond Corporation; Joseph Kochon, President, Ayoni Keh Land / Dugha Financial Corporation; Bertha Rabesca-Zoe, Legal Counsel, Tlicho Government and Advisor, Tlicho Investment Corporation; and Fred Hunt, President and CEO, Nunasi Corporation.

Four business development workshops during the two days offered practical business knowledge for existing and emerging business owners. Topics include central purchasing power; procurement; project management; and understanding community economic development.

Indian and Inuit Services' Aboriginal Economic Development and Aboriginal Business Canada divisions are committed to supporting business development initiatives that will enable Aboriginal people throughout the North to participate in and capitalize on existing and emerging economic opportunities.

Canada

EDO Workshop in Norman Wells

Industry Tourism and Investment's (ITI) Sahtu regional office conducted two Economic Development Officer (EDO) Workshops in Norman Wells in January and August 2007. The workshops were funded in part by I&IS under the Strategic Investments in Northern Economic Development (SINED) initiative.

Economic Development Workshop participants

The week-long workshops focused on increasing regional competencies that will enable Sahtu communities and their businesses to respond to current and emerging regional economic development opportunities. Local government and business representatives spoke to the group about a variety of issues relevant to community economic development including: education and training needs; resource exploration; tourism initiatives; and services for small business.

The focus was on providing participants with the background knowledge and theory required to understand their roles as economic developers. This is an important step in establishing the foundation for an organized, collaborative approach to community economic development and overall regional capacity enhancement.

Further workshops are planned for February and August of 2008.

Chief Clarence Louie Shares Osoyoos Experience and Knowledge

NWT representatives at Economic Development Seminar in Osoyoos, BC

On October 24th and 25th, the Osoyoos Indian Band Centre for Aboriginal Community Enterprise in British Columbia hosted an economic development seminar entitled "The Osoyoos Indian Band Experience" for NWT economic development officers. The Chief and speakers from the Osoyoos Indian Band Development Corporation (OIBDC) presented the band's positive and negative economic development experiences arising from its investments, lessons learned, and its views on what to do to improve the likelihood of positive business development outcomes.

Through INAC's Community Support Services Program (CSSP), 29 individuals from the NWT attended. The majority of the participants were economic development officers from the 23 community economic development corporations.

Attendees learned first-hand how the Osoyoos Indian Band successfully introduced and applied a new mindset to its way of doing business. By maximizing the use of professional expertise before investing time and money into new business opportunities, the band increased its chances of success and has used the profits from its successful business enterprises to make real improvements in the lives of community members.

Exploring Careers in Science and Technology

Indian and Inuit Services (I&IS) provided funding during the summer and fall that enabled students and youth to travel nationally and internationally to participate in a range of conferences and events. Two of these focussed on discovering careers in science and technology.

First Nations and Inuit National Science Camp

In August, fifty First Nation and Inuit students from across Canada participated in the 5th annual First Nations and Inuit National Science Camp which was held August 5 to 12, 2007 in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

First Nation and Inuit students from across Canada

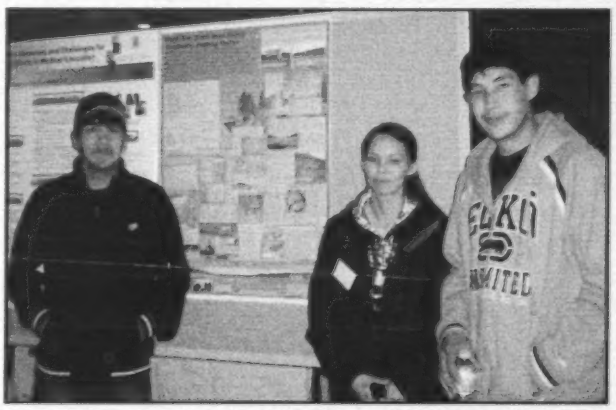
Five First Nations/Inuit students from the NWT, aged 12 to 15, attended. The camp is a unique chance for First Nations and Inuit students to participate in a variety of interactive, hands-on activities which helps them understand the application of science and technology in everyday life.

Students were introduced to a broad range of science and health-related careers and also learned about Aboriginal history and medicine, forestry, engineering, chemistry, physics, geology, forensic science and hydroelectricity. In addition, students also had time for some sightseeing and shopping.

The Science Camp is held in a different region each year so the host region can showcase local science-related opportunities.

Canadian Aboriginal Science and Technology Society Conference

In early October, three youth from Fort Good Hope attended the Canadian Aboriginal Science and Technology Society's (CASTS) biennial (every two years) conference in Calgary. During the summer of 2006, Joel Lafferty, Travis Grandjambe and Megan Tobac assisted with a geological mapping poster, created with input from the community, for the Fort Good Hope area.



Students from Fort Good Hope - Travis Grandejambe, Megan Tobac and Joel Lafferty - present their geological mapping poster

They presented their findings and experience at the poster presentation session and discussed the skills they developed while participating in the mapping project. They also attended workshops and presentations that demonstrated successful Aboriginal science and technology initiatives, became more familiar with science and technology careers and education, and met with Aboriginal students, teachers and researchers, and others, to share information, resources and perspectives.

INAC programs can provide support to Aboriginal students and youth so they can explore new educational and career opportunities.

INAC Minister Chuck Strahl visits Yellowknife

During his two day visit to Yellowknife on November 6 and 7, 2007, Minister Strahl made three announcements, met with Aboriginal leaders, had a discussion with Premier Floyd Roland, attended an informal meet and greet with regional staff and visited the DeBeers Snap Lake diamond mine.

Minister Strahl announced:

- $1.27 million in funding from the Governments of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories for community public transit projects. The projects receiving funding include: a minibus for Elders in Gameti; public transit vehicles in Sachs Harbour, Lutselk'e and Hay River; bus shelters, secure bike racks, signage for cycling trails, and pedestrian walkways in Yellowknife; a trail system in Fort Smith; as well as path and trail development and a Handi-Bus transportation in Hay River.

- $5 million in funding under the Strategic Investments in Northern Economic Development (SINED) initiative for tourism and infrastructure planning projects throughout the NWT. Some of the projects mentioned were: environmental and engineering studies for the Tlicho Road and the proposed expansion of the Taltson Hydro project as well as a scoping study for a potential all-weather road from Wrigley to Tuk; a bison interpretive centre; an NWT tourism marketing and implementation strategy; an analysis of outdoor adventure activities; and an interactive diamond display and interpretive centre.

- $6.6 million over five years on the Northern Regulatory Improvement Initiative to improve the current regulatory regime and the overall northern regulatory environment. This will address the immediate operational needs in the Northwest Territories to ensure timely review of project proposals. Neil McCrank was also appointed as the Minister's Special Representative responsible to advance this initiative.

The Minister noted it is an exciting time for the North, given the recent inclusion of the Northern Strategy in the Speech from the Throne, and that the rest of Canada is recognizing the importance of the region.

Indian and Inuit Services Contact Information

George Cleary, Director
Pat Knutson, Administrative Coordinator - (867) 669-2617

Field Services
Nicole Huppe, Manager - (867) 669-2626

Land and Environment
Brian Herbert, Manager - (867) 669-2611

Registration and Revenue
Linda Molner, Manager - (867) 669-2619

Economic Development
Altaf Lakhani, Manager - (867) 669-2613

Aboriginal Business Canada
Patrick Crozier - (867) 669- 2624

Street Address:
4920 - 52nd Street
5th Floor, Precambrian Building
Yellowknife, NT

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 2760
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2R1

Toll Free 1-888-414-4340
Fax: (867) 669-2711

http://nwt-tno.inac-ainc.gc.ca

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